



# A STUDY ON THE ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS TOWARDS PARTICIPATORY LEARNING AT GRADUATE LEVEL

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## ABSTRACT

Education is considered as an investment and also helps in human resource development. Teaching and learning are important aspects of formal education. Goals of learning include acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and ideas. As world is changing at a very rapid pace, the methodology of teaching and learning too has to be changed. Traditionally learning was considered as a transfer of knowledge from teacher to learner. Now we are moving from knowledge economy to wisdom economy, where the processed knowledge is called wisdom. There is a need to change the methodology of imparting the knowledge to the students. Participatory learning strategies provide opportunities for the learner to remain active in the process of learning. There are a variety of participatory learning strategies like cooperative learning, collaborative learning, Investigative learning etc where learners work in small groups. Participatory learning strategies develop sharing power and responsibility as the learners work in small groups. Students show a favourable attitude towards participation in activities inside and outside class room.

**KEY WORDS:** Learning, Participatory Learning, Cooperative Learning, Collaborative Learning, Investigatory Learning

## INTRODUCTION:

Education is an inevitable factor that brings about human resource development. Amartya Sen (1995) have observed that education enables people to build up their capabilities, thereby broadening their entitlements, and facilitating expansion of freedom, which in turn is the primary and principal means of development. Education is not mere acquisition of knowledge but attaining skills, acquisition of attitude and values, transmission of culture development of personality and liberalisation or self actualisation. Radical changes are taking place in teaching and learning process, especially with the advent of information and communication technology. Society has become more knowledge based and more technology intensive. In this situation teacher cannot rely on traditional ways of teaching. Students will be motivated only if the class room environment and teaching methodologies are properly structured to meet the real life challenges.

Economics, a subject that comes under social science, is taught as a specialised subject as well as alongside other subjects like sociology, politics, psychology, business, accounting, finance etc. Lecturing is used in most of the college for imparting knowledge in classrooms. This is because the classrooms are overcrowded and also the heavy syllabus that is to be taught within prescribed time. Whatever be the reasons stated by teachers and students, variety and interactive teaching and learning activities should be introduced so that students could apply economic theory in practical situations. This study makes an attempt to know more about participatory learning method and various strategies which could be used for learning economics. The attitude of learners towards participation inside and outside class rooms are also studied.

## REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES:

Agbulaul and Idu (2008) conducted a study titled "The Impact of Participatory and Expository approaches on learning Agricultural science in Senior Secondary Schools in Benue state". In the study the effectiveness of participatory and expository approach was assessed by utilising pre test post test experimental design. Purposive stratified sampling was used to select a sample of fifty students. Psycho productive evaluation test items were used at the pre test and post test phases. The mean gain scores of the pre test and post test were further analysed using t test statistics resulting to the findings that participatory approach was more effective than expository approach. The reason was that participatory approach was student centered.

Latha (2013) conducted a study titled 'promoting participatory learning through Activity Based Teaching. This study presented an activity based approach to promote participatory learning, using informal teaching patterns through simple activities. To motivate the learners and to produce better results by assisting them educationally and morally resulted in creating a conducive classroom atmosphere. It was implemented in a class of forty five. The participatory learning was found to be motivating and effective. Students were educated to learn by learning how to learn. The study also revealed that peers in the group take up the task of helping their friends. Interaction with peers and faculty creates a better rapport and also most of the students work with a sense of commitment.

Omollo, Nyakrura and Mbalamula (2017) conducted a study on 'Application of Participatory teaching and learning approach in Teacher Training Colleges in Tanzania. In this study the use of participatory approach in teaching and learning in teachers colleges was exposed with the aim of finding out whether tutors apply participatory approach in the classroom in order to improve teaching and learn-

ing among trainees. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected. The study applied stratified sampling, simple random sampling and purposive sampling procedures to select 96 respondents. The study also used semi structured interview, Focused Group discussions, Questionnaires, observation and document review to collect data. The quantitative data were manually analysed and presented in frequencies, percentages and tables while qualitative data were subjected to content analysis. The study found that tutors use participatory approach in teaching and learning with the questions and answer technique in the classroom. The study found that tutors have the positive attitude towards the use of participatory approach.

Another study by Gal Rubio, Iglesias and Gonzalez (2018) 'Evaluation of participatory teaching methods in undergraduate medical students learning along the first academic course' used qualitative and quantitative analysis of over 200 medical students. The perception of participatory teaching methodologies and their impact on learning process was studied. Quantitative data was collected through Likert type questionnaire where as semi structured interview and open discussion group provided qualitative data. Descriptive survey was shown as mean and standard Deviation. The analysis revealed that participatory methodologies may exhibit strong temporal bias in the first and second year of Medical school. Those who used active methodologies made them more autonomous. The study revealed that professor's role was still essential for participatory methodologies and their appreciation by students can dramatically change when teachers assume more mentoring role. The assessment of participatory methodologies shows a strong dependence on the time of their implementation.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS:

The present study is concerned with understanding participatory learning and to identify participatory learning techniques that can be applied for Economics at graduate level. For this, the investigator depended on secondary sources. After identifying participatory learning techniques, investigator conducted participatory learning sessions. This was followed by administering of questionnaire, where the items in it were related to participatory learning inside and outside classrooms. Questionnaire was applied to 118 students were selected from three colleges under University of Kerala. Both male (n=58) and female students (n=60) were taken for the study. The Colleges include both Government Colleges and Aided College. An unstructured interview was also conducted with college professors (n=7) to identify suitable participatory learning strategies for Economics. Percentage analysis was used for interpreting data.

## DISCUSSION AND RESULT:

The study is concerned with the following objectives.

1. To understand Participatory Learning.
2. To Identify Participatory Learning strategies suitable for learning Economics at graduate level.
3. To find out the attitude of students towards Participatory activities inside and outside college.

### 1. To Understand Participatory Learning:

The word participatory or participation refers to the action of taking part in the activities and projects, the act of sharing in the activities of a group. In the participatory learning approach all participants are active as they set their

goals and work to achieve the goal. Participatory learning has its origin from participatory education. The purpose of participatory education is to improve one's own life as well as the life of others in the world, by promoting justice and equality. Participatory education has its origin in the early 1960's in the works of Paulo Freire. The elements of participatory education can be traced from John Dewey's progressive education, Vygotsky's socio cultural theory, Situated Learning Theory of Lave and Wenger, Constructivism, Collaborative and Cooperative learning. In participatory learning process the learners share ideas, knowledge, opinion, materials and resources in order to reach a common agreement or to make joint decisions in a transparent way. Thus learning may be defined as the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience, which guides subsequent understanding, appreciation and action (J.Menzirow, 1991). For Successful implementation of participatory learning strategy, the following are to be considered.

1. Learners, 2. Teacher/Facilitator, 3. Meaningful Content, 4. Teaching & Learning Strategy (Team work/Planning/ organising/Group Discussion and active participation), 5. Learning Environment, 6. Evaluation (peer, self and Teacher)

The participatory learning aims at comprehensive development of the learners. All students are incorporated in the learning process to the extent that their endowment and potential are comprehensively developed. In the participatory learning method, teacher/facilitator acts an organiser, inside the classroom. Participatory learning is useful to cultivate social awareness, to appreciate self worth and to respect others. The learners actively participate in discussion, use appropriate media to manipulate, sort out, prioritize, modify and interpret ideas and concepts.

## 2. Participatory Learning methods suitable for learning Economics:

Participatory learning can be used in an array of different settings and include a range of different strategies employed to facilitate learning in individuals of any age. The investigator identified the following strategies for learning economics at graduate level.

### A. Cooperative learning strategy:

Cooperative learning strategy possess four basic elements namely

1. Positive interdependence
2. Face to face interaction among group members
3. Individual accountability for mastering assigned material and
4. Instruction of students in small group skills

### Cooperative Learning Instructional Strategies

There are a number of cooperative learning instructional strategies. Some of them are the following:-

#### 1. STAD-Student Teams Achievement Divisions:

It includes four or five members in a group based on heterogeneous grouping. Teacher initially presents the content or skill using direct instruction in a class. Direct instruction is a teaching strategy in which teacher presents the knowledge to be learned and explicitly directs the learning process (Shuell, 1996). Based on the material presented by the teacher, students study work sheet; collaborate on the assignment in a structured group setting. Students monitor their group member's performance and ensure that all members understand the content. An individual assessment is administered and scored by the teacher, and the scores are used to calculate improvement points. To calculate the improvement points group members take quizzes individually. The resulting individual scores contribute to the group's overall score. The individual's contribution to group score is based on that individual's improvement, not on an absolute score which provide equal opportunities for success.

#### 2. Jigsaw:

Jigsaw instructional strategy encourages active individual participation and group operation by arranging task. Just like a jigsaw puzzle that cannot be completed unless each piece is included, likewise group product cannot be completed unless each member does his part. Jigsaw instructional strategy has been classified into three types-Jigsaw I, Jigsaw II and Reverse Jigsaw.

##### Jigsaw-I

Developed by Eliot Aronson and his colleagues (1978), Jigsaw I is a cooperative learning approach in which each group member possess unique information and thus has a unique role to play. In this approach a group of five to six students work on a task that has been broken into different parts. Here the task is jig sawed or cut into pieces. Students are members of two groups, namely Home group and Expert group. Each group member is assigned a part of the task. Once the task part is identified, students leave the home group and join the expert group. Expert group is formed by members of different home groups with the same learning task. The expert group discusses the task, and strengthen the learning. After discus-

sion, expert group members return to their home group and teach their part to others. Each student is accountable for teaching his/her assigned task/topic to the members is the home group.

##### Jigsaw-II

Robert Slavin (1994) created Jigsaw II which is a modified version of Jigsaw I. Jigsaw II is a cooperative learning strategy that uses specialization to make individual experts on a particular area or topic. Jigsaw II usually has four or five members in a group. Teacher provides same learning material to the members in a group. The group members take one aspect or a part of the assigned material for expert study. These experts are responsible for teaching other group members, all of whom are then held accountable for all the information covered by each other.

### III. Reverse Jigsaw.

Timothy Heden developed Reverse Jigsaw strategy. It differs from Jigsaw I in relation to teaching portion of the activity. In Reverse Jigsaw, students are members of Home group and expert group. After strengthening the learning in the expert group, members teach the whole class rather than return to their home groups to teach the learning material.

### B. Group Investigation:

Yael Sharen and Shlomo Sharen developed group investigation, which is a cooperative learning strategy that promotes planning and inquiry. This method grew out of Thelen's group investigation model (1960) which attempts to combine in one teaching strategy the form and dynamics of the democratic process and the process of academic inquiry (Joyce and Weil, 1972).

Sharen and Sharen developed group investigation approach which involves a combination of independent learning and group work as well as group reward for individual achievement. In group investigation, students take an active part in planning what they will study and how. They form cooperative groups according to common interest in a topic. All group members help plan how to research their topic. Then they divide the work among themselves and each group member carries out his/her part of investigation. Finally, the group synthesizes and summarizes its work and presents these findings to the class (Joyce and Weil, 1972, Sharen and Sharen, 1976). Teacher's role is to facilitate investigation and maintain cooperative effort. Students collaborate with their teacher to evaluate their efforts. In Sharen's view, this is the way many real world problems are solved in communities around the world.

### C. Collaborative Learning Strategy:

Collaborative learning is the process of two or more students working together to find a solution to the group task at hand.(C.F Renkl 2007) They can accomplish this by sharing their knowledge.

### Different steps in Collaborative Learning:

**I. Pre active phase:** In this stage the teacher/instructor plan the goals and identifies characteristics of the present classroom situation in which collaborative learning to be implemented. The task instructions and the learning materials are designed. Method for composing groups must be selected.

**II Interactive Phase:** Students work together in groups finding solutions to the problems at hand. Teacher monitors and gives necessary support. Student's interaction is possible through collaborative scripts also known as Macro Scripts (Dillenbourg and Hong, 2008). Different roles are also assigned to group members. Teacher diagnoses the difficulties during the interaction and group results are consolidated.

**III Interactive Phase:** In the post active phase teacher consolidates student interaction and reflection session. This is the state of evaluation both peer evaluation and teacher evaluation. Students are motivated through evaluation.

### 3. To find out the Attitude of students towards Participatory activities inside and outside college:

The third objective of the study was to find out the Attitude of students towards participatory activities. The investigator after conducting participatory learning sessions based on cooperative learning strategy, administered questionnaire to 118 students studying B.A Economics in the colleges under University of Kerala. The study focused on three aspects namely;

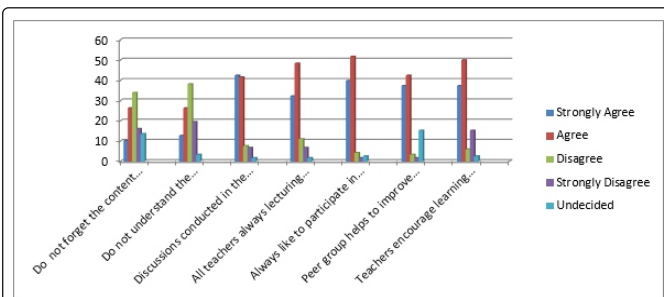
1. Attitude of students towards Participatory learning activities in Economics.
2. Attitude of students towards participation in activities conducted by the college.
3. Attitude of learners towards participation in activities outside college.

### I Attitude of students towards Participatory learning activities in Economics:

The following table shows response of students regarding their attitude towards participatory learning activities in Economics.

**Table 1: Response of students regarding their attitude towards Participatory learning activities in Economics**

Sl. No	Statement	No.& %	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided
1	Do not forget the content taught through lecturing.	n	12	31	40	19	16
		%	10.17	26.27	33.9	16.1	13.56
2	Do not understand the content clearly when preparing assignment and project work.	n	15	31	45	23	4
		%	12.71	26.27	38.14	19.49	3.39
3	Discussions conducted in the class under the guidance of the teachers are effective.	n	50	49	9	8	2
		%	42.37	41.53	7.63	6.78	1.69
4	All teachers always lecturing in the class creates boredom	n	38	57	13	8	2
		%	32.2	48.31	11.02	6.78	1.69
5	Always like to participate in group activities related to learning of Economics.	n	47	61	5	2	3
		%	39.83	51.7	4.24	1.69	2.54
6	Peer group helps to improve learning of Economics.	n	44	50	4	2	18
		%	37.3	42.37	3.39	1.69	15.25
7	Teachers encourage learning activities in the classroom.	n	44	59	7	18	5
		%	37.3	50	5.93	15.25	2.54

**Figure 1: Response of students regarding their attitude towards Participatory learning activities in Economics.**

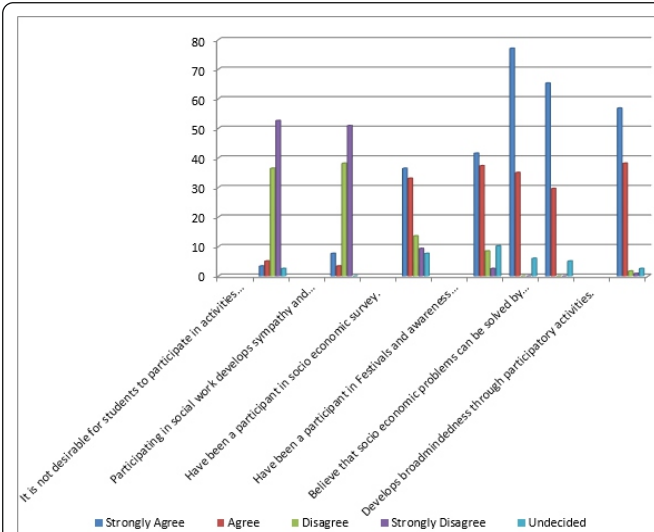
- It is evident from the above table that 40 students (33.9%) Strongly disagree and 19 students (16.1%) Disagree to the statement that they do not forget the content taught through lecturing. It is also clear that 31 students (26.27%) Agree and 12 students (10.17%) Strongly agree that they do not forget the content taught through lecturing. 16 students (13.36%) are undecided. This leads to the conclusion that most of the students forget the content taught through lecturing.
- From the table it is clear that 45 students (38.14%) Disagree and 23 students (19.49%) Strongly disagree to the statement that they do not understand clearly the content when preparing assignment and project work. It is also evident that 31 students (26.27%) Agree and 15 students (12.71%) Strongly agree to the statement. From this we can conclude that majority of the students do not understand the content clearly when preparing assignment and project work.

- In the study it is clear that 50 students (42.37%) Strongly agree and 49 students (41.53%) Agree to the statement that Discussions conducted in the classroom under the guidance of the teacher is effective. This leads to the conclusion that most of the students consider Discussions conducted in the classroom under the guidance of the teacher is effective.
- The above table indicates that 57 students (48.31%) Agree and 38 students (32.2%) Strongly agree to the statement that all teachers always lecturing in the class creates boredom. It means that most of the students are of the view that all teachers always lecturing in the class creates boredom.
- It is evident from the table that 61 students (51.7%) Agree and 47 students (39.83%) Strongly agree to the statement that they always like to participate in group activities related to learning of Economics. So majority of the students always like to participate in group activities related to learning of Economics.
- From the table it is clear that 50 students (42.37%) Agree and 44 students (37.3%) Strongly agree to the statement that peer group helps to improve learning of Economics. It leads to the conclusion that students are of the view that peer group helps to improve learning of Economics.
- It is clear from the table that 59 students (50%) Agree and 44 students (37.29%) Strongly agree to the statement that Teachers encourage learning activities in the classroom. Therefore we can conclude that students are of the view that their teachers encourage learning activities in the classroom.

## 2. Attitude of students towards participation in activities conducted by the college

**Table 2: Attitude of students towards participation in activities conducted by the college.**

Sl. No	Statement	No.& %	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided
1	Co curricular activities in the colleges are unnecessary	n	26	10	30	45	7
		%	22.03	8.5	25.42	38.14	5.94
2	Actively participates in programmes conducted by various departments	n	54	52	7	1	4
		%	45.76	44.07	5.93	0.85	3.39
3	Participates with peers in Arts Festival in the college	n	34	52	14	2	16
		%	28.81	44.07	11.86	1.69	13.56
4	Participates in sports conducted in the college	n	19	24	43	8	24
		%	16.1	20.34	36.44	6.78	20.34
5	Personally appreciates the winners of various competitions.	n	77	38	2	1	0
		%	65.25	32.2	1.69	0.85	0
6	Participating in various activities helps to develop accountability	n	63	45	1	3	6
		%	53.39	38.14	0.85	12.54	5.08



**Figure 2: Attitude of students towards participation in activities conducted by the college.**

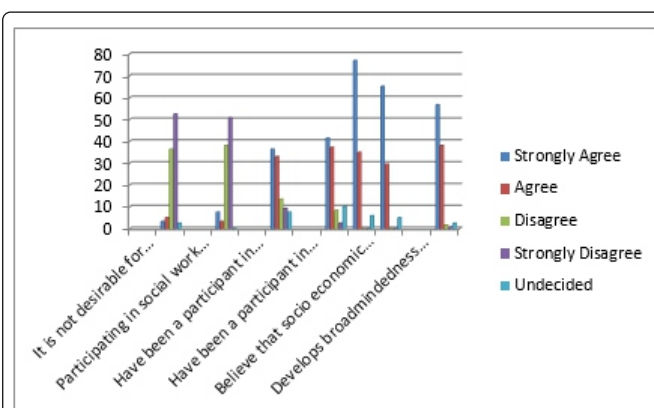
1. It is evident from the above table that 45 students (38.14%) Strongly disagree and 30 students (25.42%) Disagree to the statement that co curricular activities in the colleges are unnecessary. This leads to the conclusion that students believe that Co curricular activities in the colleges are necessary.

2. From the table it is clear that 54 students (45.76%) Strongly agree and 52 students (44.07%) Agree to the statement that they actively participate in programmes conducted by various departments. From this we can conclude that most of the students actively participate in programmes conducted by various departments.
3. In the study it is clear that 52 students (36.44%) Agree and 39 students (28.81%) Strongly agree to the statement that they participate with peers in Arts Festival conducted in the college. This leads to the conclusion that students like to participate with peers in Arts Festival conducted in the college
4. The above table indicates that 43 students (36.44%) Strongly disagree and 8 students (6.78%) Disagree to the statement that they participate in sports conducted in the college. It can also be seen that 24 students (20.34%) Agree and 19 students (16.1%) Strongly agree to the statement that they participate in sports conducted in the college. It means that most of the students have not participated in sports conducted in the college. This is because participation in sports requires aptitude in it.
5. It is evident from the table that 77 students (65.25%) Strongly agree and 38 students (32.2%) Agree to the statement that they personally appreciate the winners of various competitions. So majority of the students personally appreciates the winners of various competitions.
6. From the table it is clear that 63 students (53.39%) Strongly agree and 45 students (38.14%) Agree to the statement that participating in various activities help to develop accountability. It leads to the conclusion that participating in various activities help to develop accountability.

3. **Attitude of learners towards participation in activities outside college.** Response of students regarding the Attitude towards participation in activities outside college is presented in the following table.

**Table 3: Attitude of learners towards participation in activities outside college.**

Sl. No	Statement	No.& %	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided
1	It is not desirable for students to participate in activities outside college	n	4	6	43	62	3
		%	3.39	5.08	36.44	52.54	2.54
2	Participating in social work develops sympathy and humanity.	n	9	4	45	60	0
		%	7.63	3.39	38.14	50.85	0
3	Have been a participant in socio economic survey.	n	43	39	16	11	9
		%	36.44	33.05	13.56	9.32	7.63
4	Have been a participant in Festivals and awareness programmes	n	49	44	10	3	12
		%	41.53	37.29	8.47	2.54	10.17
5	Believe that socio economic problems can be solved by unified efforts.	n	77	35	0	0	6
		%	65.25	29.60	0	0	5.08
6	Develops broadmindedness through participatory activities.	n	67	45	2	1	3
		%	56.78	38.14	1.69	0.85	2.54



**Figure 3: Attitude of learners towards participation in activities outside college.**

1. It is evident from the above table that 62 learners (52.54%) Strongly disagree and 43 learners (36.44%) Disagree to the statement that it is not desirable for students to participate in activities outside colleges. This leads to the conclusion that students like to participate in activities outside college.

2. From the table it is clear that 60 students (50.85%) Strongly disagree and 45 students (38.14%) Disagree to the statement that participating in social work develops sympathy and humanity. From this we can conclude that most of the students are of the view that participating in social work develops sympathy and humanity.
3. In the study it is clear that 43 students (36.44%) Strongly agree and 39 students (33.05%) students Agree to the statement that they have been a participant in socio economic surveys. This leads to the conclusion that most of the learners have participated in socio economic surveys.
4. The above table indicates that 49 students (41.53%) Strongly agree and 44 students (37.29%) Agree to the statement that they have been a participant in Festivals and awareness programmes. It means that most of the students have been participants in festivals and awareness programmes.
5. It is evident from the table that 77 students (65.25%) Strongly agree and 35 students (29.69%) Agree to the statement that they believe socio economic problems can be solved by unified efforts. So majority of the students believe that socio economic problems can be solved through unified efforts.
6. From the table it is clear that 67 students (56.78%) Strongly agree and 45 students (38.14%) Agree to the statement that broadmindedness is developed through participatory work. It leads to the conclusion that broadmindedness is developed by engaging in social work.



**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:**

The investigator tried to understand the meaning of Participatory Learning.

In the participatory learning approach all participants are active as they set their goals and work to achieve the goal. In the learning process the learners share ideas, knowledge, opinion, materials and resources in order to reach a common agreement or to make joint decisions in a transparent way. Three participatory learning strategies were identified as suitable for Economics. These techniques/strategies can be applied for teaching and learning of Economics at B.A Degree level. It includes Cooperative Learning, Group Investigation and Collaborative learning. Finally Investigator administered a questionnaire to know the attitude of students towards participation in activities inside and outside college. In the study it was found that:

(1) Most of the students forget the content taught through lecturing. (2) Majority of the students do not understand the content clearly when preparing assignment and project work. (3) Most of the students consider 'discussions' conducted in the classroom under the guidance of the teacher is effective. (4) Most of the students are of the view that all teachers always lecturing in the class creates boredom. (5) Majority of the students always like to participate in group activities related to learning of Economics. (6) Students are of the view that peer group helps to improve learning of Economics. (7) Students are of the view that their teachers encourage learning activities in the classroom. (8) Students believe that Co-curricular activities in the colleges are necessary. (9) Most of the students actively participate in programmes conducted by various departments in the college. (10) Students like to participate with peers in Arts Festival conducted in the college. (11) Most of the students have not participated in sports conducted in the college. (12) Majority of the students personally appreciate the winners of various competitions. (13) Participating in various activities help to develop accountability. (14) Students like to participate in activities outside college. (15) Students are of the view that participating in social work develops sympathy and humanity. (16) Most of the learners have participated in socio economic surveys. (17) Most of the students have been participants in festivals and awareness programmes. (18) Majority of the students believe that socio economic problems can be solved through unified efforts. (19) Broadmindedness is developed by engaging in social work. From the study it is clear that students have a favorable attitude towards participation in the activities inside and outside college.

**CONCLUSION:**

Learning means a permanent change in the behavior of an individual after undergoing a particular experience. As learners differ in their ability, interest, attitude, aptitude etc, there is no single method or strategy which can be applied to all for learning. Learners are interested in participating in learning activities rather listening to monotonous lectures. Participatory learning is a relevant approach in learning economics as it provides opportunity for learners to interact, to critically analyze, to solve problems, to apply economic problems to real world problems and also to develop a sound knowledge and understanding of economic principles, models, concepts and skills. Learning strategies like cooperative learning, investigatory learning and collaborative learning can be used to teaching and learning of economics. The study also revealed that the learners show a favorable attitude towards participation in activities inside and outside classrooms. Thus content and methodology have an important role in bringing out an all round development in an individual.

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